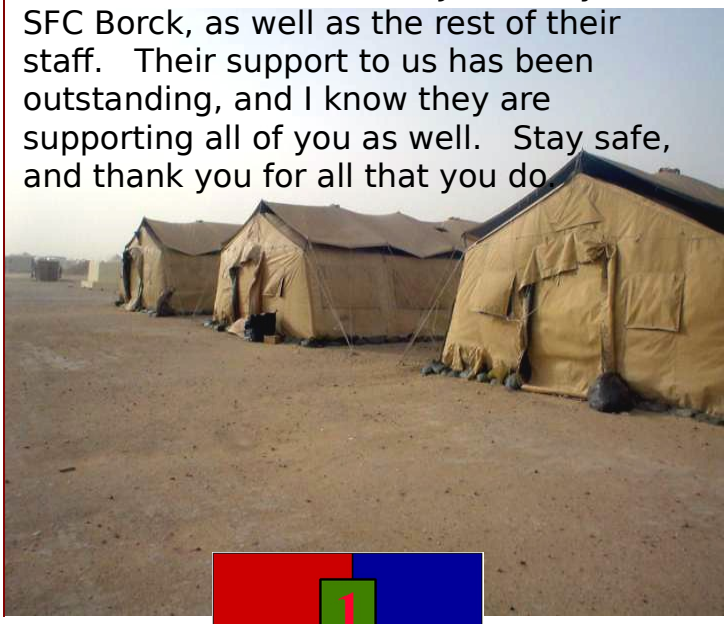
1st Infantry Division
Engineer Brigade

From Your Commander Devastator 6

Greetings to all friends and family of the Big Red One Sappers. Since deploying to Kuwait and Iraq, our ranks have grown a bit. We now have serving along side us over 1200 reserve component engineers from Wisconsin, South Dakota, Ohio, New York, and other places. They include sappers, construction engineers, designers, utilities specialists, firefighters, and terrain specialists. As time goes on we'll send back stories highlighting their accomplishments and

Both CSM Winzenried and I are amazed daily by the dedication, sacrifice, and commitment we see in each and every one of our soldiers as we work together to bring both stability and an improved future to the people of Iraq. This is and will remain a difficult mission, requiring physical and mental stamina from every one of us.

The great support we receive from all of you at home helps tremendously – you give us the strength we need to stay focused, on task, and constantly moving forward as we all work together to accomplish this mission. I know full well that your challenges back home are every bit as trying as ours here, and I stand in awe of each of you as you too meet each challenge with strength and determination. I must add that I am especially grateful to those volunteers from our FRGs who help out others when things get rough, or who are simply there with a helping hand or an ear when needed. You are our extended family, and it is during deployments like these that your selflessness is so appreciated, and so needed. I'll close by saying thank you as well to the Rear Detachment Command and NCOIC, MAJ Kennedy and SFC Borck, as well as the rest of their staff. Their support to us has been outstanding, and I know they are supporting all of you as well. Stay safe, and thank you for all that you do.



Rear Detachment Command

Greetings from the 1st Infantry Division Engineer Brigade to all who have loved ones deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. On behalf of the Commander, COL William H. Haight III, we remain humbled by your sacrifices on behalf of our great nation and its part in the Global War On Terrorism. COL Haight couldn't be prouder of all your teamwork and efforts in this most important mission. A special welcome to the 264th Combat Engineer Group from the Wisconsin National Guard (WING) and the 105th Engineer Battalion from the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG). They are a most welcome addition to our Engineer Team.

The 1st ID Engineer Brigade is performing a vast array of challenging missions in Iraq. COL Haight serves as the Minister of Public Works, Transportation, and Oil within the 1st Infantry Division area of operations. He synchronizes Iraqi public works in the area of operations in order to ensure reliable public work services. In this role, he is focused on the national level power grid, oil system, and transportation networks. The Engineer Brigade is also facilitating the repair, refurbishment, and initial placement of public works and services. Our soldiers are coordinating improvements to the Iraqi infrastructure in order to gain support of the people of Iraq and progressively transfer authority to Iraqi civil-military authorities.

Our great Sapper Battalions are assuring mobility and providing quality forward operating base construction and maintenance within their assigned sectors. The forward operating base mission is focused on force protection and quality of life upgrades for our soldiers. While conducting assured mobility operations, our Sappers are focused on keeping routes cleared, maintained, and repaired.

Again, we couldn't be prouder of every member of this great 1st Infantry Division Engineer Brigade Team. The tremendous love and support from all of the Engineer Brigade family members is what allows our solders to keep focused on performing their assigned missions to such a high standard. Thanks again for your service to our Nation during

CSM Winzenried said that everyone is doing well and that our Relief in Place with 4th ID is going well and we will assume the mission completely on the 15th of March. All of our soldiers have been performing their assigned jobs in an outstanding manner. The soldiers loved ones should be very proud of the hard work and dedication of our soldiers. To date we have deployed to Kuwait where we conducted training and received our equipment. Then road marched to Tikrit over a 3 day period in very hazardous conditions and finally assumed the mission here in Iraq. We had no safety injuries and all of our equipment made it here with no major breakdowns. The Engineer Brigade was responsible for moving over 400 vehicles and around a 1000 soldiers to Iraq as the command and control of Force Package 3.

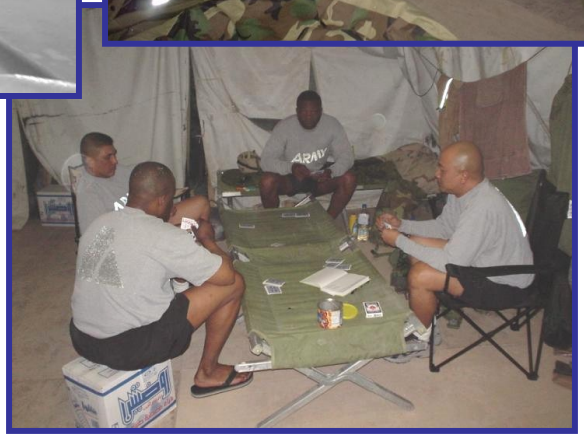
Our soldiers are doing an outstanding job here as well. The personnel in Bamberg have also been very busy. We have been putting all the loose ends together and consolidating buildings and equipment. The FRGs have been very active and have had a lot of participation. Communication has been good between the rear detachment and the families.

We have initiated calls to the spouses and next of kin letting them know their loved ones safe arrival in Kuwait and Iraq. I would like to remind everyone that the BDE EOC is manned 24/7, any issue that may arise, please give them a call, they will handle your problem or point you in the right direction.

The FRGs and the Bamberg community have lots of events planned. We encourage family members to get out and join in. We are sending out all kinds of information, if for some reason you are not getting it, please let us know. We are here to serve the families and soldiers on Rear Detachment.

HHD, ENG BDE

HHD spent three weeks in beautiful Camp Udairi, Kuwait. Our accommodations included frame tents with wooden floors.



On 2 March 2004, the unit lined up ready to make the movement North to Tikrit. The unit put all sorts of new equipment to the test. Armored doors were added to vehicles with windows an inch thick. Everyone learned to use the global positioning systems (everywhere you look, it looks the same so you need something to tell you that you have moved) and the handheld motorolas (the better to keep track of everyone as they wondered around the camp).

Upcoming Events:

Next Family VTC: 27 March 2004

Only 10 fifteen minute slots are available per Family VTC. This means that most families will only be able to use it every third VTC. Soldiers will be allocated slots based on the last time they used it and whether or not they are available on the day of the VTC. Sorry to all the families with spouses in the Division TAC (MAJ Fleming, CPT Keen, SSG Swanson, SPC Valles, SPC Clark, SPC Williamson, and PFC Jackson) as they will be forward deployed for at least 30 days and unable to use the Family VTC during that time.

Birthdays:

Happy Birthday to all the March babies back home to include: Marlaina and Carley Bratton, Sebastion Bonham, Barbara Fleming, Mary Lou and Monica Harmon, Jasmine Kelly, JT Loera, Tandre McGill, Su-Jeong Miles, Jean Quinn, Jennifer Turpin!

Happy Birthday to the March babies deployed: SPC Barton, COL Haight, SSG Loera, CPT Young, SPC Kale, SSG Dessau!

82nd Engineer Battalion Newsletter

BLUEBABE!

Message from the 82nd EN BN Rear D Commander

I would like to reiterate to family members that the 82nd EN Battalion Rear Detachment remains committed to providing the best possible family support. If you require any type of assistance do not hesitate to contact your individual Company Family Readiness Liaisons or myself.

The Company-level Family Readiness Group's (FRG's) are constantly looking for new faces to bring forth fresh ideas and activities to sustain the family members for the next year. The FRG's are currently planning for next months Battalion Easter Egg Hunt for the children.

The Battalion has completed its first phase of Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI). Everyone is doing well. The past two weeks has consisted of weapons qualification, equipment download, new equipment issue, and convoy live fire exercise. On March 7, the Battalion will begin their approach march north into Iraq.

The biggest complaint from soldiers in Kuwait is the extremely long lines. On average a soldier has to wait 2 1/2 hours for a 15-minute phone call home. This would probably explain why you probably have note heard from your loved one. Please be pa with them.

Thanks for all that you do.

Message from BLUE BABE 6

All BLUE BABE Soldiers have safely arrived and are in the midst of acclimatizing to the environment and preparing for forward movement into Iraq. Our conditions here in Kuwait are a bit austere and the winds seem to never stop. Keeping our weapons clean and our ears free of sand are a constant challenge. The team continues to focus on team building and training to gain confidence in equipment and leaders. We are anxious to assume our duties and responsibilities in Iraq and will be ready to go. The Army has spared no expense for your Soldiers with the in-theater issue of new improved and more comfortable boots and other garments to help everyone sustain themselves during the extreme environmental conditions of both the summer and the winter. We have also enhanced our weapons capabilities with improved optics providing additional overmatch against our threat. In my almost 18 years of service I am proud to report that our great nation is supporting your Soldier and his readiness like never before. That's to every friend of the BLUE BABE family for continuing to support your Soldier and understanding our most important role in Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Your continued shining light gives us all strength—keep it burning until we return home!

less You and the BLUE BABE!

erald P. O'Connor
BLUE BABE 6

9th Engineer Battalion

The past 30 days have been a whirlwind of activity for the soldiers of the 9th Engineer Battalion. The journey began for most of the battalion between 11-12 February when busses transported each of our companies to Nuernberg Airport. There, the 571st Maintenance Battalion from the 21st TSC processed each soldier. Soldiers were weighed, had their finance records updated, and finally moved on to the planes. By 13 February, 384 Gila soldiers were on the ground in Kuwait.

Upon arrival, we went through more processing at Camp Wolverine, Kuwait. We were then put on a bus to move a few hours north to our temporary home at Camp New York. At Camp New York, our soldiers slept in large tents with electricity and air conditioning. The camp also offered shower facilities, an MWR tent, a gym, a small PX, laundry facilities, a Burger King trailer, and a Subway Trailer. Unfortunately, the camp was packed and lines were very long.

After settling in at Camp New York, the battalion quickly focused on preparing for its mission in Iraq. Soldiers and mechanics worked hard, ensuring vehicles and equipment were prepared for the long trek north. To further prepare for the mission, the battalion went through a three-day training exercise in the desert. Soldiers conducted intense training in dealing with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), ambushes, fighting from vehicles, and how to call in Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters.

9E soldiers also were excited at getting new gear and equipment prior to crossing the border. We received new socks, T-shirts, underwear, boots, knee and elbow pads, and various other equipment designed to make the deployment a little

On 03 March, we departed sunny Camp New York and crossed the border into Iraq. It was a long, bumpy ride, but 3 days later we arrived at FOB Packhorse. Most of the battalion is here at FOB Packhorse, although several platoons are attached to other 2 BCT Task Forces. 1st Platoon, A Company is with 1-7 Field Artillery north of FOB Packhorse; 2nd Platoon, A Company is with 1-18 Infantry nearby in Tikrit; 1st Platoon, C Company is with 1-26 Infantry south of FOB Packhorse; and 2nd Platoon, C Company is with 1-77 near Balad. Soon, 1st Platoon, B Company will also leave us to move east in support of 1-4 Cavalry. We're not without our own attachments, though. 9E is honored to welcome B Battery, 1-7 Field Artillery to our family at FOB Packhorse.

Since our arrival here in Iraq, soldiers have been very busy preparing for the transition with their outgoing counterparts. Each of our companies and platoons are conducting "right seat rides" with their outgoing counterparts, ensuring we learn all the lessons they've picked up over the last year in Iraq. The culmination of these joint rides was the Transfer of Authority (TOA) on 13 March.

The weather is getting warmer and has started to consistently reach 90 F during the day. Now that the outgoing unit is gone, things have become less crowded and much more comfortable at FOB Packhorse. The base offers excellent facilities and probably the best dining facility in Iraq. Communication with our loved ones at home continues to improve through much better Internet and telephone capability. Mail is still a problem, but is expected to start flowing regularly in the next two weeks.

Despite the constant activity, we still miss our families in Schweinfurt. We know you're missing us too, and we'll call and write as much as possible. Thanks to everyone at home for your prayers and support!

First to Cross!

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." (The Apostle Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi -- Chapter 1, verses 3-4, NIV)

I echo Paul's words from me to you. Many of our paths have crossed and I anticipate meeting more unknown friends from the 82nd Engineer Battalion and HHD, Division Engineer Brigade. Thank you for welcoming me in to your family to fill the big shoes of CH Bulla while deployed.

During this time there is much available to you for support, training, and ministry. Take advantage of each event as you deem appropriate. Call Lilo at the Chapel for congregational and chapel community events at DSN 469 1570. Call me at the Chapel Family Life Center (DSN 469 9026) for information about training and ministry support events designed to bolster and nurture your family in a year of separation. Here is a sample of events from the CFLC.

Each Friday the CFLC hosts the

The first Thursday of the month is the Family Enrichment. Dinner is on me at a local restaurant. Timely seminar-style training is combined with a delicious dinner. Currently the group is following a series on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families. We've just started. So, get in on the ground floor! Next one is 1 April at the Wilde Rose. We had 7 "single" Moms in March.

The last Tuesday of each month is the Parents' Brown Bag from 11:30am-1pm. Bring your lunch and enjoy a relaxing environment of informal information and input regarding your specific parenting issues. Next is 30 March.

(NOTE: Please call at least 48 hours in advance for childcare for each event.)

I am proud of our soldiers. I am also proud of you for serving on your family's frontlines.

With you... With our soldiers...

Larry Pundt
Chaplain (MAJ) USA
Bamberg Family Life Chaplain
DIVENG Rear Detachment Chaplain